

7. Media diversity: The challenge of ‘doing it better’

ABSTRACT

On 25 August 2008, media practitioners, policy makers, journalists and media educators gathered on Ngā Wai O Horotiu Marae at New Zealand’s AUT University to consider the state of diversity in the news media and the challenges for ‘doing it better’. Supported by the Human Rights Commission and the Pacific Media Centre, the keynote speaker was Arlene Notoro Morgan, associate dean of the Columbia School of Journalism, New York, and author of *The Authentic Voice: The Best Reporting on Race and Ethnicity* (2006). Other speakers included Ana Tapiata, of Kawea Te Rongo and the HRC; Bharat Jamnadas, senior journalist, *Asia Down Under*, Taualeo’o Stephen Stehlin, executive producer, *Tagata Pasifika*, Television New Zealand; and Pere Maitai, news director, Pacific Media Network. The forum, chaired by Gilbert Wong, canvassed culturally sensitive, accurate and well-crafted reporting on ethnicity issues and examined the challenges for the future. This transcript was compiled by Christine Lukhelo Williams, a postgraduate student from Zimbabwe.

Keywords: diversity, ethnicity, ethnic media, Māori media, Pasifika media, multiculturalism

Arlene Morgan, Associate Dean of the Columbia School of Journalism, New York:

This forum is critical to the accuracy and the inclusion of the many different kinds of people who live not only New Zealand, but especially in Auckland, where I think I read recently there are 180 different ethnic groups established in the city. The contacts you make for this are really important if we are going to improve what journalism could do. You have to take all people in the community into consideration.

First, I’m going to talk about how I see the state of the media because in the United States, not only are we losing circulation, we are losing viewers. Most people say we are losing them to the internet, I also fear we are losing

out to nothing—people are just so busy with their own daily lives and the demands that work is putting on them that they are not getting the information other than what they pick up here and there. That really does worry me because it's so important to have people informed in order to make the kinds of decisions when the government is promoting certain policies, so that they have some information in their hands. That's absolutely the most important thing that journalism can do. No matter where or what media we use, we really do have such an important social obligation to the country. As you know, the state of the industry is undergoing a major transition on a number of fronts. From the vast number of people moving from one country to another in search of their dreams, to the technology that allows a student to use his or her cell phone to record one of the most violent outbreaks on a college campus last year in Virginia Tech, in the United States. It is overwhelming to imagine the challenges facing today's journalists—the globalisation of our economies, community crises, terrorism, coupled with huge environmental problems and immigration patterns.

I would like to address the change in technology that you are all facing and the ethical dilemmas that some of that technology can create. Just a few years ago working for newspapers, magazines or broadcasters, you wrote your story, turned it in, went home pretty sure that what you turned in would go into the next day's paper or would air without much interference. Now reporters are on a 24-hour watch. Thankfully, this trend hasn't hit college so much but it will because it has to. Students who aspire to careers in this profession must follow a pattern a lot different to the one that I took when I became a journalist. You will be expected to produce stories for the newspaper or broadcast, then turn around and do a version for your website. Some newspaper reporters are even expected to do a version for their cable TV outlet all in the same day. The latest trend is to fire all this from a mobile car unit. You are no longer a reporter but what we call 'mojos'. Some organisations—the Gannett Newspapers company for instance—now expect reporters to go into the field and download a breaking news story for the website within 30 minutes of arriving on the scene. Accuracy within 30 minutes? This is really a troublesome trend, along with blogs, which are growing in popularity. On the contrary, I do worry that blogs are creating such niche areas of reporting that people aren't getting the entire story of what is happening in their community. Journalism students have grown up in this environment and undoubtedly they will embrace all this

without a second thought. However, for those of us charged with teaching the next generation, this emerging role is forcing us to challenge almost every standard of excellence that we hold.

At Columbia, I have just started a new executive leadership training programme called the Punch Sulzberger Executive Leadership Programme named after a legendary chief executive of *The New York Times* who pushed newspapers to create stand-alone sport, business, health and art sections.

Punch understood that people needed help with sorting out what they wanted to read in their busy lives. He also knew that helping people to use the paper more efficiently would pay off, making the paper more indispensable for their lives. I doubt that *The New York Times* is as indispensable today as it was 34 years ago when Punch was making these decisions. But they certainly are trying to make the websites an indispensable part of how people get the news—as is CNN, the Associated Press, and many other organisations in the United States. Punch's *New York Times* is welcoming, and in fact leading, how we use new technologies and is producing a number of digital vehicles that help readers make sense out of a tonne of information that is at our disposal today. It should come as no surprise that eight of our 13 Punch fellows are working on dot com projects as part of their work. The decision by *ABC News* to launch six stand-alone digital international bureaus last year, is the result of work that Marcus Bedford, the London bureau chief did on the programme, and he is now the vice-president for digital information on the international scene for ABC.

Nowhere was the future of what digital work holds for the press as clear as during a presentation of a Let's Do It Better workshop in journalism, race, and ethnicity at Columbia, which I chair. As director of that workshop, I have a national view of the work that has to be done to create an inclusive report for a rapidly changing country. The projects we are doing this year are organised to cut across ethnic, racial and class lines with courage and clarity. We are involved in one broadcast programme for its portrayal of how the state of North Carolina is establishing a new force of life standards for the thousands of immigrants, mostly Mexican and mostly undocumented, who do not enjoy the fruits of their labour. We've been looking into the status of migrant workers whose housing is substandard quality while the state Labour Department stood by more interested in protecting the economic wellbeing of the farmers than the labourers who it is their job to protect.

The foundation for the book is the critical thinking of journalists who feel the responsibility to open doors of understanding to a world most of us have never seen. At the *Washington Post*, it took a team of 45 reporters, editors, web designers, photographers and videographers to capture the essence of how black men in Washington feel about themselves. Undoubtedly, that story would not have had the same power without the story voices, on the website. Its success has led CNN to do a similar project over the past few months. A decision that was critical in the light of the fact that they would have a candidate for President, Barack Obama—the first black man in the nation to get this honour.

In Philadelphia, it took a reporter/photographer website team working with teachers in the Portville school to capture the voices of children who clearly felt left behind. And in an environment that President Bush is celebrating as ‘no child left behind’, we see that many of our children *are* being left behind with consequences for the society in which they live. It is journalism’s responsibility to tell those stories. They have won awards because they met the test of providing context and voice for complex subjects. The book project that resulted from honouring this kind of reporting is called *The Authentic Voice: The best reporting on race and ethnicity* (Morgan et al, 2006), and it is now going into its fourth printing and being adapted for journalism schools around the country. It’s a unique compilation of print and broadcast stories that spelt out why it’s important to tell these stories. It was compiled with the help of Keith Woods, who is dean of the Poynter Institute in Florida. He is probably the foremost person in the country who can talk about race and ethnicity and the reporting in this field. With the help of Keith Woods and Alice Pifer, who is a former producer for ABC, we set out to create a teaching tool, even the most unenlightened teacher could use. The tool contains whole conversations on how journalism can be used to challenge and confront stereotypes, assumptions, and more often than not, rumours, innuendos—handed down from generation to generation, about people who are different than those who are doing the reporting. Essentially this book helps us learn who is an American and what it takes to come to cover the New America.

And I urge you to think about investing in such a project in New Zealand. The story called ‘Tug-of-war’ (Shah, 2006) was written after 9/11 and depicts the journey of two Somali Muslim teenage girls and how they struggle to find their own identities while also assimilating to the universal challenge of being

a teenager. I often wonder how different racial attitudes might have been today in the United States if the American press had been able to tell the stories of teenagers growing up in the aftermath of the Civil War or during the civil rights movement. These are missed opportunities and I actually think American journalism is to blame for the racial conditions in the country because they did not do enough to encourage the civil rights movement of the 1960s to remove the kind of ignorance that exists. Would it be more sympathetic and more open to change had the press done its job? Would we still be listening to ill-informed opinions of moderates instead of facts, and about how anyone could look the least different to the people perceived as Americans?

Having come from Italian grandparents, who never became citizens but whose sons and daughters fought for the sake of freedom for my country, I wince every time I hear hate mongering. And I've heard a lot of it recently with the Obama campaign, not overtly in newspapers; certainly on websites, certainly on talk radio shows. Rather than understanding the factual, we are being whipped into a frenzy while watching what some people think about Obama; his religion, his background, his parentage. We also hear about immigration issues rather than really portraying the poor Mexicans who come to the United States trying to support their families by working in fields and kitchen jobs that most Americans don't want. We hear about how they are criminals or how they are hurting the American dream.

Our book does not feature anti-immigration voices like CNN's Lou Dobbs, but journalists like Muslim Allie Shah who uncovered the abuse of Iraqi soldiers in Walter Reed Army hospital in Washington. We hear from a Jewish Italian boy named Steve McNeilly, and a white man married to a Korean American, a black producer, who was considered one of the greatest journalists in broadcasting today who helped deal with our blind spots. And a Chinese American broadcaster, Emerald Yeh, who helped talk about how Chinese and Japanese are still feeling the effects of the Rape of Nanking while living in San Francisco. These reporters teach us valuable lessons because they have learnt not only how to get the facts to do an accurate story but how to think critically if they're doing the right story.

Your challenge as educators and leaders in diversity is to move students, your professionals, your political leaders and citizens beyond supporting other races. You want to provide coverage that throws us to a deeper understanding about the people who really come here for the New Zealand dream, just as

we're trying to figure out how to cover who is looking out for the American dream. Your challenge is to see past your own blind spots and those of people who live in your community. Your challenge is to talk about the work it takes to do the right story, reaching out to new immigrants who are moving from Senegal or from Iraq or from Mexico to the United States, to Asia, to New Zealand and Australia to ensure that their lives, their viewpoints—and yes, their transgressions—are covered with voice and integrity.

Doing the right story means going beyond one's own assumptions to bring understanding in a fair and complete way about what the community does not know. Doing the right story means asking yourself time and again what you don't know and taking the steps often hard and time consuming to fill your and ultimately your viewers' knowledge gaps. Doing the right story means looking around your community and asking who is missing? Who is it that I really want to see in the story? Who are my students or my reporters, or friends talking about anyway? What am I doing to gain the cultural competence about minority groups that will make my reporting inclusive and accurate? How can I encourage a school culture that recreates a special society that speaks with a universal *we* rather than *them and us* attitude? What is my responsibility to use my talent, my reporting skills, and my observations to educate and engage my community in dialogue that could make for a better place to live for everyone?

Your challenge is to start with what I think is essential for journalism in my society—to tell the truth as we know it so that it gives you an insight into the history you're making. Your challenge is to give people stories that will possess voice, context and complexity and of course your challenge is to get your audience to see the world as it *is* as it is not, what they say, it's *going* to be.

Question: *How much do you get stereotypes in reporting?*

Morgan: Oh God, every day. It is probably the area that's most completely full on in terms of professional broadcasting because you're getting the same dialogue with the same kind of people being portrayed as criminals but you don't see the other part of their lives. You don't see them in everyday activities, you don't see them at school meetings or how they are trying to educate their children—or even how they are just, you know, living in the communities. So you see one version of what an actual American could be doing in the

community but you don't see the other viewpoints and the other perspectives. You don't see the lawyers or the judges or the teachers. You see only that and so it's a very narrow view of how you see a people. I think newspapers do a better job of creating more indepth reports as they've got more space, and they've got reporters out there. But I think American broadcasts, especially the local broadcasts, have gotten so much into the formula of doing the cops, the weather and the traffic stories, that they rarely bring in that kind of rich, community story that can portray somebody in a different way.

***Question:** Overall, how much has the growth in terms of commercialism endorsed what you were talking about earlier on in terms of reporting and about coverage?*

Morgan: The type of coverage I am talking about costs money. It means going out and putting people out there on the streets, not just at the police headquarters. You've got to send them out into communities to look for different stories. Some of the networks do a good job—ABC, *Nightline* has done all these years a good job getting out there. *Sixty Minutes*, CBS, does a good job. But even with the network level these days, I am really disappointed in pretty much how they downgrade journalism coverage out there. NBC has gotten into this thing called the predator kind of serious stories of setting up people for arrest, you know, to me that's not journalism. Really, Columbia and the attorney-generals are really taking a stand on this kind of reporting and so it's not too destructive for our students. The nation's full of these kinds of predators out there and it doesn't put this into context. It never gives, you know, what part of the population is arrested for this, how many people really, really are perpetually doing this. It gives you the feeling this is everywhere. My daughter-in-law won't allow my grandchild to play outside in the yard and they have a third of an acre. They won't allow her to play outside because she is so scared someone will snatch her. She lives in the suburbs. I mean it's highly unlikely that's going to happen but that's what a steady kind of diet of stereotypes reporting of stories starts to produce. It's harmful; it's really harmful to society.

***Question:** You talked about 'landscape reporting' in the communities and different race, different culture ... could you expand on that?*

Morgan: As a young reporter, I covered Pennsylvania, south east of Philadelphia. This is the sort of place where very few women would report on anything other than crosswords. So there I was, in a city that was 90 percent African-American. This was the heart of the civil rights movements so there was a lot of turmoil. And when I did it, I started by doing small stories, building trust in the community and getting in discussions on housing problems. And I decided I was not going to cover that community that had major, major problems with the housing authority and I started to do stories about a woman in a little danger—she was an art teacher. She was doing these wonderful, wonderful education projects so I started doing features. I started going into schools and sort of looking for positive, real kinds of life stories to see how people are living and I saw trust. It is basically treating people with respect and then they will treat you with respect as well.

Ana Tapiata, of Kawea Te Rongo and the Human Rights Commission:

Tena koutou katoa everybody and I definitely feel very humble to be sharing with all of the whanau. Every Sunday morning I think that looks so easy and I really like it but I've never had the guts to do it. I thoroughly enjoy *Asia Down Under*, and thank you Stephen Stehlin of *Tagata Pasifika*.

[Ana asks participants to collect some plain paper, fold it in squares and then to complete one square at a time with answers to some questions. Here are the questions and some representative answers]:

1. *Write down your name, occupation, and organisation.*
2. *What is the principal role of the media?*
 - To bring justice to the people by informing them about what the government is doing.
 - Informing the public fairly and accurately about issues in their interest and give it access to information that will enable it to make wise decisions about society.
 - *Truth*—to report in a balanced, accurate and responsible way to the audience.
 - To tell people's stories about the world to the local readers and viewers and also to allow all of them to see themselves in our stories.

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- Rangitoto island in Waitemata harbour
- aroha love
- kapa haka Māori performing arts
- kōrero narrative
- poroporoakī closing

5. Name a journalist you admire and list two qualities you admire in that person.

- Seymour Hersh Dedicated and crusading
- Dan Eaton Truthful and balanced
- Wena Harawira Humble, intelligent
- Nicky Hager Writes about what he believes in; protects his sources
- Mark Sainsbury Honest and trustworthy, senior journalist
- David Robie His dedication to media in the Pacific
- John Pilger In-depth tenacity
- Richard Pamatatau Good, clear communicator; brings different points of view to audience
- Tapu Misa Presents a perspective I can relate to; doesn't shy away from issues and supports her arguments with reasoned arguments
- Rob Harley Sincerity, incorporates emotional responses
- Peter Arnett Courageous, pragmatic

6. & 7. Name a chief reporter, editor, subeditor, or other person in management you admire.

- Jim Mather Down to earth, hard-worker
- Craig Page Honest, understanding
- Taualeo'o Stephen Stehlin He goes beyond to grow Pacific news, inspirational, addresses non-mainstream issues
- Pesi Fenua Thorough, interesting, gives new and diverging angles
- Bonita Bigham Dedicated, loyal; attempts to tell Māori stories
- Tati Urale Decisive, doesn't take crap

- Jane Skinner Excellent researcher, ‘she’s my neighbour’
- Selwyn Manning Puts in straight press releases and being honest about it. Not just rewriting them and putting a byline
- Peter Rees Open-minded, opinionated
- Finlay Macdonald Political focus on the *Listener*
- Derek Fox Perseverance, satisfies Māori audience
- Melissa Lee Manages to bring different stories from different cultures to air
- Denis Welch Honesty in his writing, integrity, pursues all voices
- Allen Walley Informed and enthusiastic

8. *Māori Language Week was 21-27 July 2008. Note an article that you wrote for MLW. If you didn’t write one personally, then note one that your organisation wrote and—if not—leave it blank.*

- *The Aucklander*—‘Why we can’t still speak Māori’
- Articles in *Franklin County News* and *Spasifik*. The *Western Leader* had a cover story on Māori Language Week.
- TV3’s *John Campbell Live*—‘Vocabulary’

9. *What conditions prevailed that allowed the story to be published when it would not be appropriate at any other time?*

- Organisation has a policy of producing Māori stories at that time.
- Had events on Māori language week at work.
- Government supports it.
- It’s topical for that week, just as a love story for Valentine’s Day is. [The news organisation] saves these stories up, even though it could always be topical.
- I am a student—we had a lecture on the Treaty of Waitangi that week, but I think that had more to do with the curriculum than Māori Language Week.
- In *Franklin County News*, it appeared because not a lot of people speak Māori in the area (it was unusual). Also because they wanted to promote the idea.

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- Story in *Western Leader* was because it was topical.
- Vocabulary on *John Campbell* a commitment to Te Reo.
- Māori language was used in television news in ways it would not normally be used because it became politically okay to do so.

10. *What is a personal bias that you have that affects the way you produce your news?*

- Towards bigger, foreign affairs stories.
- More interested in issues about and affecting minorities, especially Pacific Islanders.
- Social justice stories.
- Pacific issues only.
- Arts and immigration but a little weak on local issues.
- I am always looking at both sides.
- Fostering young minds.
- I focus on good news that tells the best about Pasifika people.
- Liberal viewpoint.
- Social issues looking for stories of courage, survival, inspiration, tenacity, resilience.
- Humanitarian stories.
- Intent on movies and the arts.

11. *What is one step you can take today that will improve your ability to cover Māori stories?*

- Get informed about more Māori related issues.
- Learn Māori language—but not in one day.
- Think of Māori stories.
- Be braver in talking to Māori organisations.
- Get better exposure.
- There is a need to push in order to get Māori stories into media in a balanced way.
- Share what I've learnt from this session.
- Recruit more Māori at our journalism school.
- Talk, and listen daily to Māori radio.
- Keep up to date with Māori current events.
- Strengthening Pacific and Māori connections.
- Go to Arlene's workshops.

- Start reading Ranginui Walker's *Struggle Without End* (Walker, 1990).
- Better understanding of marae protocol.

Bharat Jamnadas, senior journalist, *Asia Down Under*:

Kia ora, namaste. First, I would like to point out that I am a replacement for our executive producer. A press release from the Pacific Media Centre about today's forum was headed: 'Diversity movers and shakers offer solutions at media forum'. I just want to point out that I'm not such a mover and shaker. I am just a senior journalist for a production company called Asia Vision Ltd on a year-to-year contract. The company produces the programme, *Asia Down Under*, which screens for half an hour on TVOne's network on Sunday mornings at 8.30 am.

Asia Down Under is a model TV magazine programme catering for many communities in Aotearoa under the heading 'Ethnic Voices Striking a Mainstream Chord'. I can only speak from my experience as a reporter on the programme, which I have worked for since it began in 1994. And I can only speak about Asian voices. Other ethnic communities such as Africans, South Americans, people from the Middle East and so on have made Aotearoa their new home don't as such have a voice in the media.

The programme began in 1994 as *Asia Dynamic*, which was conceived by TVNZ's Education TV (ETV), and publicly funded by NZOA. ETV does not exist anymore. We started screening on the ETV timeslot on Sundays at 8.30 am. Apart from being a reporter I was a co-presenter alongside Melissa Lee when it first began. My background was in the print media, having worked for *The Fiji Times* for seven years.

The broadcaster, ETV, produced the show for two years before being taken over by independent Asia Vision Ltd, owned by Melissa Lee and Robin Kingsley Smith. *Asia Vision* was set up in Auckland's Karangahape Road and Kingsley Smith produced the show. Melissa was co-producer and presenter. I began work as reporter for Asia Vision in 1996 and have been there since. The programme name *Asia Dynamic* changed to *Asia Downunder* in 1999 when it moved from the Sunday morning non-commercial timeslot to a commercial Thursday night 11pm timeslot, which was after the late news, *Newsnight*. It returned to the Sunday morning timeslot the following year and still remains there.

Asia Downunder covers a large number of communities under the broad term Asian—all the way from Iran to Japan and all the countries in between. It was developed to reflect the diverse Asian communities that make up Aotearoa. When it began, the population of New Zealanders of Asian origin was about 100,000. The population now is almost three times that number.

We have told many topical stories since it started. Stories are as diverse as arts, business, sport, music, fashion, food, youth, culture, health, refugees and issues which affect us all, and so on. Apart from the stories we also share our cooking secrets. In any given week we feature about five stories and a cooking segment.

When we first started broadcasting, it was during the time when many new Asians were arriving into the country under new immigration regulations which went into effect in 1987. Talkback radio listeners were warning of an ‘Asian invasion’. People said they were taking over the country, despite the fact that the majority of immigrants into the country were still from Britain. There was a revival in racist attitudes towards Asians. Asian communities had been the targets of media bias from way back since the arrival of the Chinese gold miners in Otago and the arrival of the first Indians more than 100 years ago. Once again, the New Zealand media was lapping it up big time.

Our stories reflected on who the Asians were and how they felt. We told many stories which were picked up from stories in the mainstream media and in the course of telling them gave a cultural context. Our stories were told with a different perspective. It gave the Asian community a chance to voice their feelings and needs on various issues that affected their lives in New Zealand society. The community rarely had seen themselves on TV unless there was a body in a bag floating in the harbour or when some dairy owner was shot dead. It enabled Asian people to tell Asian stories not only to Asian people but to the wider community.

Although many of our stories see the Asian community in a positive light we did not avoid controversies. But these controversies were not beat up and sensationalised as they often are in the mainstream media.

We are still continuing to bridge the gap between the Asian communities and the wider community. There are a lot of preconceived ideas out there about what Asians are supposed to be like and we break that. A non-Asian viewer said to me recently that every week he learnt something new by watching our programme. I have no doubt at all that we have helped enrich the lives of many

living in Aotearoa by providing a window to our Asian culture and heritage.

Our last episode for 2008 (we do 40 every year) will be the 600th episode since we started. This calculates to 300 hours of television.

Hopefully, we will continue to tell more stories. There are no shortages of stories to tell. Our viewership rate is up to 135,000. Sometimes we don't do too well, especially if there has been a late rugby game on TV the night before and our audience drops to about 35,000 viewers. That is still pretty good considering that a programme like TV 3's *Sunrise* is lucky to get even a third of the higher figure in the whole week that they are on.

For our producers, it has not always been easy to please the broadcasters and the funders. Six years ago we were told that our stories were too positive and that we lacked visualisation skills. We were also told we needed to change our style to continue broadcasting and to get funding. Mind you this is all done verbally, of course. Our producer was told that I had an accent and so should only be employed for a few days a week and only as a researcher.

To 'save' the programme, some changes had to be made and former producer and co-director of the company Asia Vision, Robin Kingsley Smith, stepped aside for experienced journalist Kim Webby to produce the show. I'm really grateful that my employers, Melissa Lee and Robin, fought to keep me on board and lucky for me I am still there. Kim left after producing for one year and Melissa has been a producer since then.¹ Again last year we were told that we needed to be more media savvy. That we needed to be more interactive and do stuff on the internet and YouTube and all that. That we needed to focus more on youth—not that we didn't but it was not enough.

You know, I am not concerned that we have a more mature viewership. They are mainly people who are in the 30 plus age group. And what's wrong with that? Young people are not going to get up at 8.30 am on a Sunday morning to watch our programme. In fact I'm sure many of you are aware that young people are not watching as much TV as they used to. They are getting what they want on the internet.

I'm not sure where we are heading in the future. There seems to be always a doubt whether the funding Asia Vision receives, which is just over a \$1 million a year, will continue. That amount is only slightly more than what the campaign received 15 years ago.

Taualeo’o Stephen Stehlin, executive producer, *Tagata Pasifika*:

Talofa lava. Thanks for the opportunity to address you. I’ve had the privilege of leading *Tagata Pasifika* since ... well, the Jurassic era.

It’s an interesting concept, isn’t it? Diversity. It seems at odds with nationalistic jingoism that seems to define our togetherness. In our attempts to define a national identity, it’s easy to be blind to the elements that make us unique. Diversity in New Zealand’s major broadcaster is not only needed, it is vital. You might be familiar with this:

[Two video clips: Spot the Islanders and Tagata Pasifika—Diversity in the Community are shown.]

I can’t recall a major campaign that features Pacific people so prominently. It signals a change, a marketing one at that, which recognises the diversity of NZ society in a very strong way—in its channel branding.

Now I’m going to play a Television New Zealand induction video, which attempts to give new employees some idea of what TVNZ does—and I hope it will give you some idea of the environment in which *Tagata Pasifika* operates.

[The TVNZ induction video is played.]

In our programme on *Tagata Pasifika* we try to get across to all Pasifika Islanders resident in New Zealand.

Tagata Pasifika is described as a Pacific Islands (television) magazine but I eschew that label—television shows like *Asia Down Under* and *Tagata Pasifika* are, to me, programmes of *identity*. They are no more a magazine, than *Dancing With The Stars* is a news show. But it’s a convenient label in which to categorise these shows—and that goes for the funding as well.

You see what you endlessly get with this kind of show is trapped into the constructs between what the broadcaster wants and what the funder will fund. So you fit into it as best as you can and Bharat told us about the amazingly arrogant and disgustingly racist nonsense that goes on in an attempt to show that we don’t know what we are doing! And it’s about control and unfortunately the show is about identity.

We have no control. The only control we have is within the editorial. But

even then the funders would stick their noses in. I suppose you need that and so we're on a roller coaster. What other platforms you are on, you know you can see that we are in the compromise that's happening all the time. What are you doing to increase your awareness? What are you doing to make sure your show isn't too worthy? Amazing. Breathtaking nonsense but it happens.

The pressure on *Tagata Pasifika* to be all things to everybody remains today but I am really pleased to see how well the Pacific correspondent, carried out so well by Barbara Dreaver, has become an integral national part of *One News*. It has given value and a voice for Pacific communities in New Zealand. It is an emotional involvement—actually who cares about the objectivity because people react to television emotionally and that's why such rich media is so strong. It's an emotional engagement and sometimes that can be quite dangerous because you end up not having any kind of reasonable argument—you end up either supporting dogma or not supporting it at all.

In terms of diversity and media, where do our responsibilities as journalists and broadcasters lie? It may be helpful to sketch for you the development of a show like *Tagata Pasifika*. First of all the intent of the programme was to give voice to communities, which were largely invisible. You know, the standing joke for Māori and Pacific people used to be that the only time we ever saw ourselves were on shows like *Crime Watch*. But this 'voice' is a recent interaction of Pacific Islands presence on a large New Zealand network. The old lady of Pacific Island broadcasting has its roots in the daily five-minute broadcast *See Here*. The programme's intent was to help Pacific people to better integrate into New Zealand society. Pacific people were able to see themselves in a show called the *Pacific Viewpoint*. And interestingly, 30 odd years ago Māori and Pacific issues were mixed together in this show. In the 1980s, the Māori renaissance also created some politicisation of the then new Pacific immigrant communities with vanguards of protest in Polynesian Panthers. Shows like *Tagata Pasifika* and *Asia Down Under* are an expression of a desire to recognise the diversity of New Zealand. And they in turn echo the advances made by Māori in broadcasting. Within a broader context, *Tagata Pasifika* allowed the Pasifika people to tell their own stories—with some provisors.

Those who pay, control—and in the curious world of New Zealand television broadcasting, the state pays the production costs to a Crown-owned company. And, as you have seen, TVNZ is required to be a profitable

business. A big broadcaster is big because of its big audience and although *Tagata Pasifika* is on at ‘challenging’ times—and is considered to have a small audience—it’s still about 100,000 people a week. Never ask a producer what time they want you to be on—it’s always the same answer. But what we see, and when we see it on screen, is determined by someone else working towards other objectives. And at the same time there are more Pacific voices on air than ever—it’s just that they are on different platforms.

[The next clip is called Who Decides/Many Voices (PI TV GRAB) and the speaker tells the audience about the digital Freeview platform.]

The digital revolution has created opportunities undreamt of before. Television NZ launched TVNZondemand a couple of years ago and came up with the catchy objective ‘Inspiring New Zealanders on every screen’. Increasingly, the notion of ondemand will create business and content challenges. Ondemand is the future and it will obviate the tyranny of the schedule. The challenge for broadcasters is how to make money from these new outlets. The ondemand initiatives are also kind of cool because of the ability to look back on our past. An objective is to try to get as much of our 48-year-old television history online as possible. The state broadcaster then becomes the nation’s cultural bank—in all its diversity.

You’ve all seen the ads—the switch at home from analogue to digital. The analogue transmission system is now so old—and obsolete—it needs to be replaced. Freeview is a platform in New Zealand in which each of the major broadcasters have bandwidth for up to six channels.

It’s amazingly exciting but in some ways I am a little nostalgic for the early days of broadcasting—as easy as it is now to laugh about those early days. Try telling a child these days that television starts at 3 pm and ends at midnight. And that there is only one channel. That it, and in the early days of radio broadcasting, was a shared nightly experience. In an increasingly fractured audience base, even in a country like New Zealand with a small population, that shared experience is being eroded away by the plethora of choice in information, news and entertainment.

The challenges ahead lie with capacity building and telling our stories ourselves. The digital age affords opportunities undreamt of in an analogue age. Arguments that there is not enough capacity, while I acknowledge them,

mean little to me. We need to have a big bold dream and create opportunity—nearly 50 years ago nobody in New Zealand knew how to make television. They just learnt. So why not a Pasifika digital channel? At the moment TVNZ manages a Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade initiative to satellite our programming into the Pacific. A bold dream would have to be a conversation with the Pacific.

Pere Maitai, news director, Pacific Radio Network (NiuFM):

Tihei Mauri ora. Ngā mihi ki te marae. Ki a rātou kua ngaro atu me te hunga ora tena koutou, tena koutou, tena tatou katoa. My greetings to this marae, this house, the land outside, those who have gone on including a number of journalists and broadcasters both Māori and Pacific Islanders who I've worked with, and the journalists and broadcasters. But greetings to you all—Māori, Pākehā, Pacific Islander, Jewish, Dutch, American and everybody. Following up from what Stephen was saying, I do have a dream, I do have a want and some of that has already been done. Stephen mentioned a programme called *Pacific Viewpoint* that was both Māori and Pacific Island that started more than 30 years ago. And I was on that team—that original team. In fact when someone rang me up, I had already been working on a general newsroom and then someone said: 'Come and work on a Māori and Pacific Island programme, television programme.' I said, 'You've got to be joking,' because I was in the general newsroom.

Now, my official language is Māori. I am a son of a Presbyterian Māori minister who became the leader of the church. When I explained to my father when I was still at school that I no longer wanted to become a lawyer or an economist—that I thought I wanted to become a journalist—my father whacked me and asked: 'What colour is that?'

For so long I wanted to get right into the game of things—I am nosy, that's my problem, I am nosy— that's why I am a journalist. Anyone who wants to become a journalist has to be nosy first of all. They want to know what has been happening. That's the thrill of the day and I want to be the first to know what's been going on. I have been lucky enough—no fortunate enough—to be involved with the beginnings of radio for Māori and also in this country's television. I have been involved with Prime and radio and have been part of starting up in the provinces. It's been great. I have worked in Pacific Islands television as Stephen mentioned, worked with Bharat Jamnadas,

started a multidigital television station in Malaysia, which broadcast in four main different languages involving 22 channels. The story I have is around where I have been and what I am working on now. I work now as a director of news and current affairs for Pacific Media Network, which at the moment comprises three radio stations, three networks. One in Auckland for NiuFM Auckland, and there is NiuFM Network which covers the country and is now on the frequency of 103. Then there is a sister one called 531pi, which is also an Auckland-based station. NiuFM is more music focused, 531 is more community, language—the different languages of the islands. NiuFM is also a bit hip hop and that, ah, was cheesy if you listen to it in the afternoon but the age group is 18 to 39. That is where it ends.

Our dream, our next dream, we are already streaming. We are on Bebo. We want to go where Stephen is now but we want to go further. We are already talking to Pacific Islands and they are talking back to us. We were there at the Tongan coronation. We were there at Turangawaewae for the celebrations of the Māori King and there were a number of Pacific Islanders involved in that. We had been involved in Niue. In fact we were lucky enough that we could go into—even though we had our reporter there—we were able to talk to the Niue Premier and were back here to broadcast on our news programs. We were able to have the conversation that Stephen was talking about because we are getting that audience and it is mainly around the Pacific Islands. We want to know Pacific Island news in *New Zealand First*, PI news in the region, and general news in sport. You know a lot of PI information. Everybody wants to know about Sunnyvale going to play for too long, or Valerie Vili getting the gold medal or the Samoa weightlifter, Ele Opeloge, just missing out on the bronze medal.

There are a number of mainstream media who are trying, just spreading out and that's simply because they have no choice. For you young ones, who are planning to become journalists, hey—I am looking forward to it. Watching you. That to me is more important. And getting the story!

With the growth of Māori and Pacific Island populations, as everybody keeps saying, by 20/20 we will make up a significant percentage in the population of this country. But do you know what our major exports are at the moment around Māori and Pacific Islanders? It's people. As soon as we grow up, you know we get a bit older, we start to go to Australia and we start to go everywhere else. We should have a vision. The dream should be also to

contact Māori and Pacific Island people around the world. Whether they are in Hawai'i, at Brigham Young, San Francisco, The Rock Los Angeles. We should be able to tell our stories to them and they will be able to tell us their stories back. That to me is where we are going to next.

Note

1. *Asia Down Under* producer Melissa Lee was elected as a National Member of Parliament in the November 2008 general election—the first ethnic Korean New Zealander to be elected to the House of Representatives.

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